

SILVER CLOTHES



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SILVER CLOTHES

BY ANGELA MORGAN

THE HOUR HAS STRUCK

UTTERANCE

FORWARD MARCH

HAIL, MAN!

BECAUSE OF BEAUTY

GOD PRAYS

Fiction

THE IMPRISONED SPLENDOR

SILVER CLOTHES

By
ANGELA MORGAN



DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
NEW YORK

1926

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BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

To all the friends who have helped and encouraged me; whose names, too numerous to print, are nevertheless indelibly recorded; and to that greatest friend, my mother, lately gone across the threshold into another room of life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the privilege of reprinting certain poems in this book, the author's thanks are due to the London *Spectator*, the London *Poetry Review*, the *Orient*, the *Women's Roosevelt Memorial Association*, the *National Cathedral Foundation at Washington*, the *Art Alliance of America*, *Unity*, the *Foreword*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, (English Edition,) the *People's Chorus* of New York, *International Feature Service*, the *Girl Scout Leader*, the *Woman's Viewpoint*, the *Cathedral Age*, and other publications in which they appeared and were copyrighted.

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SECTION I

SILVER CLOTHES

SILVER CLOTHES

Someone in silver clothes
Came over the doorsill
To bid me good-night.
I saw the flicker of a star candle,
A phosphorescence curiously bright. . . .
A flare of Heaven on the door handle.
Someone in silver clothes
Bade me good-night. . . .

"All the way from Paradise to you, my child."
"Oh mother, oh mother, was the way wild?
Were the stars cold, mother, sharp for your feet?"
"No, daughter, oh daughter, starlight is sweet.
All the path was paved with love, your love and mine."
"Oh mother, oh mother, how your hands shine!
You had gone far, mother, far away from me—"
"Nay, daughter; nay, daughter, not if you could see.
Closer I than when the body put us out of reach,
And the wall of failing flesh barred us each from each.
Oh, my living daughter, I am living, warm as you,
Death was never so at all—only life is true.
All of us are living whom the world thinks cold;
All of us are radiant and none is old;
Some are in silver clothes, some are in white—"

"But, mother, dear mother, yours are so bright!
Even as you taught me when you were on earth—"

'A light that lighteth every soul that comes to birth' . . .
I always knew it, mother, when you were here:
'Twas lustre out of Paradise that made you dear.
I always saw you, mother, whether others did or no,
I knew it was an angel companioned me below.
I knew it was an angel in a mother's guise—
And now you've come to tell me, from Paradise."

"Daughter, I am close to you—close, did you but see.
Could you reach a little way, you could come to me.
All your thoughts I understand, all your troubles share—
Only say you wish for me, and I am there.
Daughter, could you look at me, as I look at you,
You would see that never death—only Life—is true."

STORM CELESTIAL

Out of the air it arrives—

Out of the wide, immense, imperceptible air;

Out of immovable space, a miracle moving;

Quiver of needle-swift rays in the midst of my room,

Shower of amber shredding the normal daytime,

Pelting the walls and the floor, yet leaving no trace;

Swarm of celestial snow afire on the carpet,

Stinging the air but leaving the flesh unstung;

Smiting the soul with beauty beyond believing,

Thrilling the veins and the marrow with mighty assurance.

I who was sad in the midst of the unbelievers;

I who was bowed and dark for a moment of pain,

Summon the children of earth to behold the wonder—

Passionate rain of Heaven piercing the solid day!

(Here at my ear the thread-like sound of its singing;

Here on my hand the patter and drip of amber;)

Marvel of ether, ringing splendour of life,

Intimate thrust and thrill of immaculate Presence

Burning the air with storming needles of light,

Searing and claiming my soul to fiery issues,

Writing a Name eternally golden over my heart.

THE OUTER SHAPE OF AN EVENT

The outer shape of an event
Is often so deceptive, that we deem
The good, our evil; and our evil, good . . .
Our eyes are blinded to the gods' intent.

The coarser shell may fold a sweeter flame
Than satin leaf or blossom ever knew;
The rough, unhappy year may bring to pass
The Spirit's harvest ripened into fame.

Judge not the form, that shelters with its crust
Our days sublime upon this moving sphere;
The smooth, accustomed happiness may bring
The blight of barrenness, the curse of rust,
While bitter winds that tear us from our death—
(Our griefs, our losses and our enemies)
The outer ill, the terror come to pass,
May give the mind its wings, the soul its breath!

THE TIGHT-ROPE WORLD

The tight-rope world we walk with frightened tread,
With spinning planets underneath our feet,
With marching constellations overhead,
To some is but a mad adventure sweet.
To others, timid and by terror stung,
The gibbering abyss awaits its prey;
And others, in a flashing moment swung
From life to life, will jubilantly sway
Like wingèd souls enamoured of the air,
Finding nor fear nor darkness anywhere.

Some giant spurs us on and cracks his whip,
Hid in the curtained folds of circumstance,
And if perchance our clumsy feet should slip,
He cries us shame, and goads us to advance.
Oh, could we see the fiercely shining face
And know the joy within the giant's breast,
Our singing feet would keep the enraptured pace
Of gods that walk upon the mountain crest;
Or like the birds that skim the rainbow through,
Would dare the ethereal path, triumphant too!

LIFE IS A MOVING PICTURE

Life is a moving picture. We who sit
And think that we ourselves are part of it,
Seeing our joys and miseries careen
Across the lighted surface of the screen;
We lookers on, who watch from day to day
The purple pageant of the world's display,
And urge our will to capture what we can
Within the measure of this caravan. . . .
How mighty could we be, did we but know
That we ourselves are makers of the show!

Life is a moving picture. We who fret
And toil and steam and agonize and sweat—
Ourselves the seeming victims of mischance—
The fated puppets of a whirling dance. . . .
'Tis we who write the plots and stage the scene.
And spell the climax, whether high or mean.
Ours is the drama, ours the written scroll;
Our own are all the titles that unroll;
And ours the genius, the creative skill
To change the moving picture at our will.

Life is a huge scenario, and we
Not any part of anything we see.
We watch the battles by our frenzy wrought,
The tragedies with crimson danger fraught,
The plunging steeds, the final headlong dash. . . .
We see the towers and the temples crash,

But we ourselves, we are no part of it;
We are the watchers, silent where we sit
Or stand apart, our entity our own;
The man himself is never overthrown.

Life is a moving film, and what we see
Has left us still unharmed and whole and free.
No wrong has torn us with its teeth of fire,
No vice has gripped us with its brute desire,
No time was squandered and no tears were spent—
We still are masters of the firmament.
We still may seek and find the immortal plan—
God's image yet shall blossom forth in man.
The blinding scales from human eyes shall fall—
"It was a moving picture, after all!"

MOTHERS

You are like the steel frame bearing up the building.
Storms beat with their naked fists upon you,
Still you stand.
Hurricanes howl and challenge your immovability—
Still you endure.
The cruelties of misfortune,
Like bullets of ice,
Shell you with stinging hail. . . .
You lift your towers in the sunlight afterwards,
And no one knows you were bombarded.

Thunders and lightnings assail your courage,
But your immortal confidence keeps faith with God.
Oh, the undying loveliness, the supernatural persistence
Of that strange substance we catalogue as "steel!"
Oh, the amazing perseverance of mothers,
Outlasting earthquake and the deluge.
I stand and gaze with reverence upon the skyscrapers,
Upborne by steel.
I kneel with greater reverence before the strength of
mothers,
For they are like the framework bearing up the building,
Firm and exalted amid the chaos of the centuries.

SECTION II
WINGS OF THE SOD

SPRING IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

WINGS OF THE SOD

Grass is the wings of the sod;
Leaves are the wings of the tree;
Clouds are the wings earth wears for God;
Love is the wings of me.

HAWTHORNE

These are young angels
Emerging in the sun.
This one wears a white dress,
This a rosy one—
And all sing Hosannahs
When day's begun.

TELL ME, TREES OF AVON!

Tell me, trees of Avon,
Bearing the marks of battle on your shields,
And on your heads such diadems of light
As crown the seraphs in the court of Heaven;
Wearing the wisdom of the centuries
As regal knights, beneath your coats of mail;
Dumb with your knowledge, calm as sages are. . . .
You who beheld the royal conqueror come
With shout of brazen armies and with flame—
Nay, in an earlier time,
In olden days beyond our ken
When the fresh word of Life
Lay young and silver on each burning leaf—
Had you a Vision then?

Among your ancestry, your forest kin,
Had you a slender prophet with white words
Sharpened upon the frosty edge of Truth;
Some high illumined poplar who could look
Beyond the borders of his fellow trees
And span the golden future as a book?
Swayed he with eloquence as with a storm
Crying: "Behold! One cometh to the world
Whose name shall be as torches in the night,
And by his light shall all the earth be lit
And by his words shall wisdom be enshrined
To live forever in the human soul?"

When, with a shout, he summoned all the host
With piercing bugle and with swinging bell:

"Hear ye, O trees! I have a truth to tell.
For I have seen a vision as of gods
Roaming the forests in the days to come." . . .
Had he the courage boldly to proclaim
That radiant name?
Spoke he the truth as now the millions must,
That age nor death nor poverty nor rust
Nor cities tall, nor any earthly thing
Can dull the name of that resplendent king?

Tell me, trees of Avon,
Sturdy reminders of the enfolded past—
Fragments of glory gone beyond our ken—
Knew you young Shakespeare then?

THE CLOUD

O cloud in beauty rising,
Your feathered wings unfold
With purity surprising—
A swan in summer's gold.
The softness of your soaring
Has beckoned me away
Where Paradise is pouring
Through the crevice of to-day.

Aloft in your bright spaces
No walls or canyons are;
Your majesty effaces
Even the morning star.
O cloud supreme and splendid,
I feel my soul akin,
My spirit, too, is blended
With the light you travel in.
My purpose and my longing
Like yours that ride the blue,
My very self belonging
In the upper air with you.

APRIL AIR

The April air is soft like the face of my mother,
Tender and smooth to the touch is April air. . . .
Now I remember how, in the satin twilight,
She smoothed my baby hair.

How I would look to see the pulses throbbing
Within her cheek, her eyes turned to the West;
How suddenly, with a little sound of sobbing,
She caught me to her breast.

Mothers have fears that even children know,
Borne swiftly through the sensitive nerve and vein;
Thus would I feel her joy when she was happy,
Thus would I bear her pain.

Thus would I find her courage, which ascended
Bright as the wind that leaps the imprisoning sod,
Would know the bitterness of trial ended
By faith in God.

The April air is soft as the face of my mother. . . .
Oh let me run from the city's harsh embrace
And find again that cool, entrancing refuge,
A little child in search of April's face!

TRIBUTE

You took me to your noble heart,
England, England!
You made me feel myself a part
Of England, England.
You yielded me your winsome lanes,
Your meadows furred with misty rains—
Those treasures that the spirit gains
In England.

You spread a carpet for my feet—
England, England.
'Twas brodered fair with flowers sweet
As England, England.
I came when Spring was in her prime,
I heard the choirs of Heaven chime,
I walked with God in bluebell time
Through England.

I saw your cities, clothed with age—
England, England.
I conned your story page by page
Oh England.
But effigies and temples cold
Must fade before the living gold
That lies within the Future's hold
For England!

CHURCH BELL TIME IN STRATFORD

In the evening, walking through my garden,
Where quietness like satin falls around me;
Where bushes take to cover of the darkness
And lilies fold their mantles close about them
While everywhere a blossom draws a shutter;
In the evening when the colours all are silenced,
When night has turned vermilion into grey,
Soothing the wildest yellow to submission,
Hushing the clamour of the royal asters,
A dark rebuking finger on the lips once vivid. . . .

Oh then, as if an outbreak of rebellion
Shattered the silence into radiant sound
Of beautiful, melodious bell voices
Brightly complaining to the awakened air,
I seem to know how flowers may be silenced,
Purple and gold and emerald forgot,
Only to waken in the enraptured chorus
Of bells that burst in colour on the air!

THE BIRD IN THE COURT-YARD

(A Hot Weather Incident; Time, The Present. Place, the Court-Yard of a Modern City Apartment Dwelling)

Sweet singer,
Perched for an instant in the city's oven,
Your note is like a sprinkle out of Paradise,
Freshening the hour.
A little spray of song, crystal, delicious, cool.
The parched, impatient thoughts that threatened,
Vanish like dust before shower.

How did you find your way to me,
To us of the burning town?
You out of woodlands, how did you dare
The Perils of our Sodom, and the glare
Of sunfire beating down?
How did you brave the noise, the terror;
Tragedies known to human creatures only?
Are you not lonely
Here in our stupid prison?
Where thinking people stifle all day,
So girt about with plaster and with clay,
So cobblestoned and roofed and walled,
They might not always hear if a bird called!

O you with your little burst of pure and reeling ecstasy,
Brook-beautiful, rain-cool. . . .
I see the dancing pool
Where all your notes went splashing one by one,
Out-singing even the sun;
Making a wonderful, bright oasis for me,

For us of the burning city.
O you of the love song, the genuine pity—
Such sympathy you pour,
How may I say you are less than human. . . .
You who are more!

ENCHANTED NIGHT

Whippoorwills, magnolias and a moon,
And a warm white velvet wind that wraps me round—
A fairy cloak invisible and sweet
Lying in delicate folds along the ground,
Caressing to my feet. . . .
Whippoorwills, magnolias and a moon!

Whippoorwills, magnolias and a star
Like a blowing taper poised above a tree—
O stay for him, for he must travel far
Before he finds the garden door and me. . . .

Whippoorwills, magnolias and the spark
Of myriad fireflies tangled in the dew;
And then a sound—I dare not lean to hark—
(What if it fail me, what if it be not you!)
What if the hush and hoping of my heart,
So long deprived, were cheated at the end. . . .
Who knocks below? . . . O friend of mine, O friend! . . .
Whippoorwills, magnolias and a moon.

JULY DAWN

Over the hills of fawn
I saw the lily dawn
Rise like a wraith between
Two cavaliers of green;
Two poplars proud and still
Who, swaying to her will,
With newly quickened leaves
Carried her gauzy sleeves,
While sudden breezes ran
To gather up her fan.

Out of the velvet skies
Moth-white, I saw her rise.
Through spiderwebs of lace
I glimpsed her golden face,
I saw her flesh, a rose
Glowing as satin glows.
I saw her hair, unbound,
Soft flowing to the ground,
While bushes, drenched with rain
Held up her silver train,
And choirs from every tree
Rang out: "'Tis she! 'Tis she!"

FIELDS IN AUGUST

God! Blaze on me from the path
Where lily trumpets blow;
Fill my heart with fragrant winds,
My hands with fluted snow.
Bend thine eye
From the lavish sky
Where on its wheel of flame
Thy chariot goes whirling by
As hills announce Thy name.

God! Rush to me from the road
In hurrying clouds of heat;
For even dust may tell of Thee
And stones Thy pulse repeat.
Oh goldenrod
And thistle pod
And thorns upon the vine,
And grasses singing from the sod. . . .
Are spoken words of Thine!

God! Embrace me in Thy sun
From myriad shining fields.
Let me be Thy glowing grass
When all the meadow yields.
Send Thy blaze
Through darkened ways
Against the Winter's cold;
Let me keep through all my days
The joy of August gold!

I SAW AN AZURE LILY

I saw an azure lily dreaming
In a golden sky,
I saw its petals parting softly,
Softly drifting by—
So feathery and blue they were,
Blown softly down the day,
And when I looked again, the stem
Had melted quite away.

Golden-hearted, gently blooming,
Softly blooming in the west.
Like the lily on my breast
It has withered quite away,
But I shall find another
At the break of day. . . .
Yes, I shall find another at the break of day!

NOVEMBER MORN

The grape-sweet air, the apple-tinted sunshine,
The fruity look of hills and mountains,
Wine-brown against a clean white sky;
Air which I drink and drink again
Like some intoxicating juice . . .
This is November!

Fields and pastures deeply russet,
Or glowing still with green,
Where, framed about with fences,
Beautiful cows move leisurely,
Spotted shapes of velvet black and white—
Repeated in the azure pasture overhead
Where flocks of ink-black crows amid the fleece
Match them in miniature.
And over all, the silver of November sunshine—
An incandescence unbelievable; the mingling
Of earthly and unearthly radiance . . .
So do framed masterpieces shine,
As by invisible illumination,
Hanging at hushed attention
Upon the walls of an art salon.

Poise and dignity, richness, power,
The concentration of innumerable colors,
The close-packed pressure of a thousand scents,
Fragrance within fragrance, tang within tang,
The dark and mellowed sob of beauty's final chord;

Then the shrill whistle of the bugle wind,
A swirl of torn and frightened leaves,
The beckoning of welcome firelight from my window . . .
This is November.

TREES IN WINTER

Trees are the orchestra God has to play on;
His harps, His cellos, His violins. . . .
These are His strings to do with as he chooses.
In summer He garlands them with leaves and flowers,
But a time comes when He is tired of these,
And weary of too timid summer showers.
Even His midget choir of crickets, birds and bees
All glamour loses.

Oh then God lifts a summoning hand,
And out of the north a great storm spins,
Lays bare the verdant beauty of the land,
And strips to quivering nakedness His trees.
As when the Leader calls, and men obey,
(Summer and Spring but tuned them for this hour)
His master winds await the word of power:
"Now. . . my musicians. . . play!"

EPICURE

The sky dips low to-day
To taste the sugared sweetness
Of the snow-frosted hills.
I half believe she likes the look, too,
Of rich molasses cake
Where the brown earth shows through.

O sky, some weeks will glimmer by
Before the young clouds dip
To take their yearly sip
Of Spring's exhilarating green. . . .
So eat your cake and icing while you may,
And drink the sun's cool claret when it flows
Over the world's edge at close of day.
You are a cultured and well mannered guest
And wait with patience what the seasons bring,
Yet you as well as I, are yearning now
For the mad cordial in the glass of Spring!

SNOW DRIFT

Not a flaw in this drift
Of sumptuous white;
No rut, no rift,
No track in sight.
No foot of man or beast or bird,
No wind this beautiful mound has stirred.

If Nature had softly, suddenly spoken:
"Lo, I shall give to man a token
Rounded smooth as a mother's breast,"
No lovelier art had been exprest.

Your friend who told you, yesterday
The childish thing we often say:
"Nothing is perfect, or can be,"
O bring him to the hills to see
Where wheel nor foot have ever blurred
The Creator's fresh, immutable Word—
Perfection in one perfect gift. . . .
Snow drift!

SECTION III

MAJESTY

MAJESTY

I am Majesty, older than all men;
Older than antiquity, new as Paradise.
When the earth was chaos, I was living then,
I was the Dawn Word fashioning the skies.
Older than Jehovah,—for that they called Him not
When the sky first mothered her fierce-blown tapers—
Watched I the spinning world, luminous and hot,
Summoning her bridal veil of snow-pure vapours.

I am kingliness past earth's believing.
Egypt and the Pharaohs housed me for a day;
Temple, throne and pyramid my royalty receiving,
Greece and Rome endured me till their splendour fell away.
I was Jacob's ladder that led to Heaven's floor;
Watched I the seraphim ascending and descending;
I am the mystery behind the king's door,
I knew no beginning and I have no ending.

I am Majesty, older than all men;
But many live contented with a pauper's pleasure;
Feeble is their hearing, though I summon them again,
Bid them forth to find the key to the king's treasure.
I was the beginning, before the world began,
Builder of the atom, genius of the sod.
I am immortality within the breast of man. . . .
I am Divinity, I am God!

MAKERS OF DESTINY

Say not 'tis well that men should let things be!
Not to bring flint to match
Nor coal to grate
Nor tinder to the wood,
Never could kindle fire.
How then doth calm submission kindle good,
Or grapple Fate
Or win the heart's desire?

The brave must answer to a fiercer beat
Than dullness knows or calmer men contain;
And he whose aims would never know defeat
Must swing his purpose to the high refrain
Of speeding earth and silver-humming star,
Or angel mounting on a golden wing.
Not less his goal than their bright courses are,
Nor less a god is he.
So tell no more this false and foolish thing—
“'Tis well to let things be.”

AMERICA'S WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(The National Cathedral at Washington)

The hills of all the world their witness bear
To One Supreme, Invisible, Divine,
The Essence of our being, and its Cause.
In far cathedral, synagogue and shrine
The tablets of the ages bid us pause,
Beholding how the burdened race may wear
The future's glory in its hour of prayer.

So let us build this temple of our land.
As though the nation's valor, swift and warm,
The nation's soul, like Heaven-leaping fire,
Had towered into great, enduring form,
Each noble window and new-risen spire
Through burning centuries of faith to stand,
A symbol'd promise and a pure command.

Thus shall America defeat the sword,
With taller Truth than any Gothic door;
An abbey where the people's soul shall speak
Its mighty Legend for the future's lore;
A temple where the warring shall be meek
And sundered nations find their true accord.
This is our country's Dream. Perfect it, Lord.

THE SELF RIDES ON

I am tall—taller than the tallest house;
I am large—larger than the largest city;
I am deep and fluid as the fluid ocean;
Strong and terrible am I as storms that sweep the forests
 in their pride.
Than rimless continents am I more wide;
Nor wood nor stone nor rock may compass what I am. . . .
Over the body's buttress as a dam
The rushing waters pour their flashing might,
The self eternal in triumphant flight,
Never the same and yet the same forever.

O Strength beyond my being, help me wear
The glorious bright beauty I must bear
Upon the fragile body. Give me strength
To carry and command, across the length
Of will and word and arduous emotion,
The torrent's force, the splendour of the ocean.
O make my body servant unto Thee
The while my self rides boldly to the sea!

THE SHAKESPEARE OF TIBET

(Among the photographs of temple paintings and hangings in the Indian section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, we find the figure of a poet saint, Mi-La-Raspa, "The Cotton Clad," whose story is a fascinating page from the closely guarded lore of sacred Tibet. Mi-La-Raspa could endure the harshest exposure to the elements through his knowledge of intensive breathing and meditation, keeping his whole being aglow in the bitterest weather. We find him sitting before his cave in an attitude of listening; an exquisitely wrought, sensitive figure, immune to suffering, and cannot doubt he was the medium through which came thronging the thousands of songs and poems which have made his name immortal in Tibet. The author has attempted to express in these verses her impression of his personality, her awareness of his meditation.)

MI-LA-RASPA MEDITATES

The loud tattoo of their tongues is silenced;
Their dark commotion—battles, hatreds, triumphs—
All have gone quiet as brass no longer beaten.
I am alone with thy melodious voice, O cave!
O rocks and sky and stillness,
I have come softly,
Obedient to Him that drew me.

O Depth beyond depth, under the sod and through it.
O Height above height, Being above being,
I, Mi-La-Raspa, am drawn inward to behold Thee;
I and my senses all sucked inward
By Thy devouring Wind that will not let me stay.
Earth like a pin point dwindles with Thy coming;
Thine azure fan, the sky, shuts to a vanishing ray.

Earth is a toy my stature has discarded.
Earth is a child's drum that sounds for me no longer.
Why should I grieve for it, who have gone journeying
To Thy great universe that grows within me.
What has my soul to do with darkness,
When in the beauty of Thy Light emerging?

I, who was naked, am comforted with ermine.
Thou, everlasting, hast clad me in Thy purple.
Thou art a breastplate of rubies about my bosom. . . .
Now arises within me the music not of mortals.
Now awakes the harp without strings,
Of thine own Hand's tuning.
Now swelleth within my heart
Warmth beyond warmth, feeling beyond feeling.

I, Mi-La-Raspa, would they have crushed with buildings;
They, with their clamour of God and where to find Him.
I, Mi-La-Raspa, would they with noise demolish—
Myriad stones piled by a myriad peoples.
What has my soul to do with temples,
When through my cave the archways of the Eternal
Lift in the burning air their frames immortal?
O Frame not made with hands, O Sculpture of the
Almighty!
I, Mi-La-Raspa, lay hold upon Thy substance.
Rock of the cave, scent of the earth, look of the sky—
gone!

All that was solid, vanished as a vapour;
All that was vapour, solid to my senses;
Wind of the world dumb to the Wind of Heaven;
Cold of the earth grown hot with the heat of Heaven.

O my soul's Furnace, O Fountain Flame, O Love!
Thou like a jasper fire dost feed my lungs forever;
Thou, an exceeding fire, dost melt the rocks before Thee.
Where Thou hast breathed upon me,
Lo, am I made as sunlight.
Where in my veins before was blood,
Thy myriad's mighty chanting.

O Thou beloved Source within my life expanding,
I who was once but man, a speck within Thy vortex,
Now am I known, caught up within Thy measure.
Now has the Mind of Thee made pace within my own,
Now hast Thou claimed and called me: "Mi-La-Raspa!"

GANDHI

Not with a clamour of golden deeds,
Nor girth with brazen armour doth he come;
No heralds trumpet him on royal steeds,
His armies follow not with martial drum,
Nor sword, nor shield, nor helmet hath he known,
Whose sun but now hath risen in its place,
Whose kingdom cometh grandly to its own
Mid the eternal triumphs of the race.

Have you at times been swept beyond all creed
By some new-dawning vision of the right?
Your mind ablaze with thoughts of human need,
Drawn heavenward within a wakeful night?
Have you said then, your faint soul strong at last:
"Whatever be the torture of this goal,
Here and here only shall my lot be cast—
This is the plan God fashioned for my soul!"

Then look on Gandhi, Hindu saint and seer;
Lo, in the living flesh behold your vow—
The ancient Truth grown intimate and near,
That God may find His image, here and now,
Here is the heart that dares defy the strain
And terror of conditions as they are;
Here is the sturdy will, immune to pain,
Here is the soul that dares become a star.

Here is the noble intellect that saw
Beyond the spasm of our human lust
The silent grandeur of eternal law,

Wheeling its wingèd way above our dust.
And linked his being with that lofty scheme
And ordered all his ways that he might find
Out of the infinite, a way supreme
To bring immortal justice for his kind.

How like a sun he shines above our dearth!
How like a man he leans unto the earth.
He is the answer to your faith and mine—
Man by his love for man, becomes divine.

THE OLD PHARAOH

TUT-ANKH-AMEN

Your majesty has crumpled up the years
And flung them on the sands like leaves of roses.
Time is a whirling gossamer that disappears
Above the splendour where your dust reposes.
A thousand thousand centuries had failed
To quench the cause that made you truly king. . . .
Leader magnificent were you, who trailed
New paths to beauty for our following.
Because you are invincible, sublime,
You smite with glory the immediate hour.
Your pierce the vistas of imperial time
With more imperial consciousness of power
Till we who knew you as a mystic name
Stand staggered in the presence of your fame.

(For John Haynes Holmes)

EUCLID OF MEGARA

They crown you not, nor speak your grandeur here
Where long another Euclid holdeth fame;
The years that sound the beauty of his name
Have banished yours from this forgetful sphere. . . .
Yet you are he whose words the gods revere;
Whose golden truth, an apple of pure fame,
The world has eaten gladly without shame,
Yielding its ancient heritage of fear
As slaves upon a gladsome day set free.
For naught of evil dwelleth in that feast,
Nor any curse endureth on that tree,
Where cometh saint and prodigal and priest,
Enfeebled age and forward pressing youth
Fired by your zeal, your noble thirst for Truth.

SECTION IV
RIGHT OF WAY

RIGHT OF WAY

Oh to cleave this solid day
And give the spirit right of way!
Disorder out of order bring,
Surface beauty roughly fling,
Rend the husk and smash the vow
That Paradise may happen now.

Oh from prison dark to find
The spiral stairway of the mind;
On those narrow steps to thrust
Fearless hands upon the rust,
Wrench the lock or dare the key
That sets the fiery being free!

Even as the ether's blade
Rives the fortresses we made,
Push the spear of splendour through
The ordered ways of life we knew,
Nor be terrified to see
Wreck and chaos follow thee.

Round the sword of thy resolve
Let the shattered scheme revolve;
Let the ancient pattern sprawl;
Let the crumbling fragments fall;
Pierce the walls of fact that fold
Eden's burning walls of gold.

So thou follow straight the rift,
Pure as light, and silver-swift,
Break tradition's iron door,
Spurn the smooth mosaic floor,
Follow on through splintering glass
Out upon ethereal grass.

Oh, how bold and sweet the air
(Whether cloud or sun be there)
Oh how great with stars and room
When the mind has left its tomb!
Life, this thing I promise thee,
Nor shall rest till I be free.

CONFLICT

I am made up of many selves,
Each warring on the other.
Scarcely a sister self can act,
Unchallenged by its brother.
My self of joy, rebuked by pain,
Stands doubtful and undone;
My sterner self still crying out
For justice yet unwon.

I am made up of many selves—
The fierce, the sad, the sweet.
Bright wings would lift me to the sky,
Though duty holds my feet.
My stronger self bids pleasure go
In garb of sacrifice,
My stricken woman self looks on
With pleading in her eyes.

I am made up of many selves,
Each warring all the way,
And some must frown, and some applaud,
Whatever I do or say.
Oh, seldom do all selves at once
Cry out with full acclaim.
I follow one, to hear a sigh
That pierces me with blame.

And when to one my heart gives rein,
I rouse another's fears;

My weeping self is hushed before
The self that has no tears.
O Life, bring forth thine alchemy
To fuse my selves in one,
That what thou biddest me to do,
Some day shall all be done!

THE DISGUISE

This the disguise my spirit now must wear;
Soft eyes, round chin, dark hair;
The look of being naught but womankind—
Only a small window for the mind.
Frail hands, frail limbs, a love of beauty. . . .
But oh, the fierce rebellion back of the veil!
Oh tumult, wind and storm and slashing hail!
O vision overlapping all I see—
Wild gods using the frame of me.

Yet gaily do I tread, my sorrow being
That all shall pass me by, none seeing.
Only in words that trouble all my soul
May that which ever partial is, be whole.
And you who listen, after I shall die,
Believe—truly believe!—that it is I.
Believe the words I left are all my own,
Spoken in secret from a hidden throne,
Where One who tortures me with whips of gold
Gives me no peace until the Dream be told.

This the disguise my spirit now must bear—
Flesh light as the kiss of summer air:
The joyous gestures of a child at play—
But, oh what mighty wings across the day—
What lightning garments, fairer far than snow—
Trailing the dusty street where mortals go.

THE WALL

I beat my head against the wall. . . .
The structure would not yield at all.
Its stones were made of human thought,
Of superstition it was wrought,
Of fear and ignorance and hate;
Nor was there any little gate
Where Truth and Love might enter in
And thus make remedy for sin.

I beat my head against the wall. . . .
I could not see it yield at all.
The wall was steep, the wall was gray,
The dust of ages on it lay.
How wide it was I could not see,
Its darkness hid the sun from me—
And yet I saw an eagle fly
Above it in the golden sky!

O life, O hope, an eagle flew
Triumphant in the soaring blue!
He saw no gruesome wall of fate,
He needed not an entrance gate,
No fear could hide the sun from him
Who swung upon the morning's rim.
Ride forth, my heart, above the wall. . . .
You are an eagle, after all!

WAKING TIME

Out of the seething winds, the ringing sky,
How shall I bring myself, who may not die
Yet downward in the morning light must go
To find the level earth that robs me so? . . .
The flattening, cold earth, where, wan and small
I who a spirit was, immense and tall,
Dwindle to fit the cage and its commands,
User of eyes and brain and feet and hands?

Yet dwindle not, knowing the path I went,
And how the giant soul has pitched his tent
A conqueror upon this earthly hill,
And from his tower cries obedience still.
I, who a giant was, a mortal am;
The length and breadth of being I must cram
Within these narrow walls, the body's snare,
And crawl the earth who soared the singing air!

O kingly spirit, come to my control!
O Self that was, command the self that is;
Bring to the smaller will, the lesser soul,
The fiery strength to move our destinies.
Thou Knight, companioned by the lordly sky,
No less a knight nor less a king am I!

MORNING GLORY

I who in dreams did drive the spinning earth
And tame the fiery comets for my steeds,
Now to my body do I bring new birth,
A living splendour for my daily needs.
Down to my pillow do I draw the fire
That sped me through eternity at night;
Nor strength shall fail, nor singing muscles tire
When through my being flows the celestial light.

I glide to earth from Heaven's shimmering stair;
The gift is on me. I shall win my goal.
The gods are here who left me to despair—
Nor ever were they absent from my soul.

The fluid hour arrives. The day commands;
The ribbons of the morning are unfurled—
The reins of circumstance are in my hands—
Once more, a god, I drive the spinning world!

SECTION V

SUNLIGHT

SILVER DELUGE

Because day comes to me in silver cloth of sunlight;
Because noon is a royal topaz for the heart's taking,
And sunset the throne room of the Creator;
Because life drips and shimmers and overflows the walls
of time

With splendour beyond speech or comprehension,
Inundating the floor of the world,
Making day's ceiling to burn with mighty incandescence
And the night to scintillate with unbelievable fires—
Thérefore do I fling the doors of my heart
And let Life enter in!

I will saturate myself in daylight,
I will crown myself with the coins of the sun;
With the shower of day's riches I will cover myself,
For Spring has begun!
I will deck myself with bracelets of the dawn's making,
I will put upon my feet anklets of rejoicing dew;
I will clothe my spirit in crystal and sapphire,
In the silver deluge from a snow-bright star.

SONG OF THE NEW WORLD

I sing the song of a new Dawn waking,
A new wind shaking
The children of men.
I say the hearts that are nigh to breaking
Shall leap with gladness and live again.
Over the woe of the world appalling,
Wild and sweet as a bugle cry,
Sudden I hear a new voice calling—
"Beauty is nigh!"

Beauty is nigh! Let the world believe it.
Love has covered the fields of dead.
Healing is here! Let the earth receive it,
Greeting the Dawn with lifted head.
I sing the song of the sin forgiven,
The deed forgotten, the wrong undone.
Lo, in the East, where the dark is riven,
Shines the rim of the rising sun.
Healing is here! O brother, sing it!
Laugh, O heart, that has grieved so long.
Love will gather your woe and fling it
Over the world in waves of song.

Hearken, mothers, and hear them coming—
Heralds crying the day at hand.
Faint and far as the sound of drumming,
Hear their summons across the land.
Look, O fathers! Your eyes were holden—
Armies throng where the dead have lain.

Fiery steeds and chariots golden—

Gone is the dream of soldiers slain.

Sing, O sing of a new world waking,

Sing of creation just begun.

Glad is the earth when morn is breaking—

Man is facing the rising sun!

AFTER DARK DAYS

Light lost herself in the oncoming battle of vapours.
Light, crowned Princess of the Ethers,
Lost her way and was hostage in the tents of the enemy;
But Spring has ransomed and will restore her.
Look! Already she hails us from the hills of foes re-
treating!

Showers of sequins from her twinkling raiment
Fall with sweet music on the roofs and pavements.
Almost she seems to wrench her jewels from their setting
To fling us hope and cheer and flashing courage.

"See! I am coming. Look! I am almost there.
Be of good faith for but a little longer!"
Handfuls of silver shower against the window,
And suddenly upon the floor her golden slippers dancing.

FROM A HILL TOP

I declare from this hill,
From the height of this beautiful crest,
That nothing shall alter my will
To attain what is best.

'Mid the sweep and the daring of space,
I declare for the courage to bring
My life to the ultimate place
Of glory and Spring.

. Oh sweet is the rapture of poise,
And strong is the peace of a hill
Afar from the steam and the noise
Of furnace and mill.

And I stand on this wonderful slope,
An eagle abreast of the sky,
And the day is a bugle of hope. . . .
I am glad I am I!

MAYTIME IN LONDON

Blinding shimmer of metal satin slipping across the floor;
Pouring of silver over the table's damask;
Dripping of silver down from the walls and windows;
Piling of vivid coins on the carpet, chink upon yellow
 chink;
Glory of Light caressing the calendar over the mantel
 shelf;
Streak of impossible beauty painting the common chair;
Trail of ethereal tissue blowing along the hall. . . .
Sleeves of a seraph going, wings of a god arriving!

APRIL SUN

My friend the sun shone on me
From Heaven's fleecy tower;
His glory stole upon me
As fragrance from a flower.
And like a flower came his face
From petals pure as snow;
I marveled that such simple grace
Could move my spirit so.

My friend the sun sits mountain high,
Oh higher still his throne!
And yet he reaches from the sky
To claim me for his own.
So many, many million miles
The sun is far from me,
And yet I answer when he smiles
As friendly as may be.

LONDON AFTER FOG

The day like *diamanté* showered on my pillow,
Made rapturous the dingy room for me,
Sprinkled the coverlet with rainbow powder
And with the dust of some celestial moth
Silvered the morning round and made each task
A winged and velvet pleasure.

The noon, a burning lustre, slid across my table—
Where else so rich a silk had not been laid—
Lacquered the common wall with fairy legend,
Flared into glory in a glass of water,
And on my wrist and fingers did bestow
The clasp of open friendship.

THE SUN IN OUR STREET

The morning sun in our street
Is like a knight with lifted lance.
He comes across the daisy field
With tossing plume and fiery shield,
With laughter and swift arrogance
To fill the world with new romance.

The morning sun upon the sill
Is like a lady's jeweled hand
Welcoming with clasp of white
Bold rider, brave knight;
Yielding to the sweet command
That knights and ladies understand.

Forth upon the sparkling grass
Noble youth and nimble lass
Bow and sway and pirouette
Gracefully in minuet,
While their diamond sprinkled feet
Are like the sun in our street.

Look you where a presence shines
Along the scarlet creeper vines . . .
There! Within that dazzling place
Find you not the bridegroom's face?
Swift upon his steed of white
Fair lady, brave knight
Flee before the gorgeous tune
That ushers in the dizzy noon.

THE MIRACLE

Sunlight! That unbelievable radiance out of space
Called starlight by some other planet race;
That innocent, immaculate projection
Of the Creator's warm imperishable substance
Made visible to the wondering eye of man.

WHITE AMETHYST

The sun has hung a white amethyst upon my wall;
It glows and trembles with astounding beauty.
Surely in such a universe as this
One need not die of duty!

SECTION VI

LABOUR

HYMN TO LABOUR

They are living the poems we write,
They are doing the glories we sing—
Diggers of ditches and builders of roads,
Toilers who carry humanity's loads,
Mothers who give with no thought of return,
Daughters who help them and fathers who earn,
Sons who endure in the dust of the fight
Are *living* the poems we write.

They are living the sermons you preach,
Minister, prophet and sage;
You who would summon your gods to the earth,
Blind to the sum of humanity's worth;
You who are praying for angels again
To rescue a planet now peopled with men. . . .
See how the humblest of all you may teach
Are *living* the sermons you preach!

They are doing the deeds you inspire,
They are brave as the angels are brave;
Drivers of engines and hewers of wood,
Farmers who labour to furnish us food,
Miners who suffer that we shall be warm,
Builders of houses that shield us from storm. . . .
Prophet, behold how in letters of fire
They are living the deeds you inspire.

They are living the sagas and psalms,
They embody the terms we employ:—
Sympathy, brotherhood, courage, control,
Strength of the spirit and joy of the soul.
Saintly, superior, humble and brave,
They are Christs and Messiahs whose souls we would save.
And the hour is at hand when the mighty in turn
Shall listen to Labour and learn!

PHILOSOPHY IN A GROCERY STORE

My grocer has a kindly face,
Words of wisdom, ways of grace.
Something happens when he speaks—
You'll remember it for weeks.
While he wraps the things you've bought,
He can keep a kindled thought;
While he handles tins and jars,
He can move among the stars.

Said my grocer yesterday:
"I can't help what others say,
Talking of the things they see—
Everything's *alive* to me.
Not a thing I touch is dead—
Sugar, salt or flour," he said.
"Not a thing with which I'm dealing
But is full of life and feeling."

Looking on my grocer then,
How I pitied foolish men
Too preoccupied with trade
To behold how things are made.
"Why, this counter where I stand"—
And he stroked it with his hand—
"This which seems a thing of wood,
If we only understood,
Suffers pain and rapture too,
Just as human beings do.
Ever hear a timber scream
When you're sawing off a beam?

Ever hear tomatoes talk
When you pull 'em from the stalk?
Look and see it for yourself!
See 'em crowding on the shelf,
Laughing, whispering and playing. . . .
Wish I knew what they were saying!"

Here my grocer snapped the string.
"There's a use for everything.
There's a reason and a cause
For the beauty and the flaws
Of this great and goodly earth.
Not a stone but has its worth,
Not a common grain of corn
But is glad for being born."

"How you love your work!" I said.
Like a king he raised his head,
And the joy that leaped from him
Must have charmed the cherubim.

So I tell the folks who say
Grocer men are common clay:
"It may pay you to explore
Philosophy in a grocery store."

THE LITTLE SLAVEY

The little slavey who brings hot water
And makes my fire in the morning—
I feel somehow in my soul
She is superior to her “betters.”
I drag from bed and open for her the door,
I slide back snugly, cravenly,
Shutting the cold and fog away
With cowardly eiderdown.

Who am I that I should be snuggled in safety
And she—tender and frail, ill-nourished perhaps—
Should be carrying trays for my comfort?
Who said she should waken at dawn
And I sleep till I please?
Who sends her so nimbly from doorway to doorway
Taking the “early teas”?
Who said she should bend to blacken the boots
Of the idle unworthy and bored who are drowsing in bed—
(Who should polish her shoes instead!)
Whose whip is above her that she should be up in the cold
Urging her will to its best
While the older and stronger and wiser
Are taking their rest?

“Yes, madam. The fire is all made
And your breakfast is ready—
Very good! Here it is;
Yes, the coffee is piping and hot. . . .
Thank you, madam. . . . I’ll fetch it at once,
I’ll not be a moment.” . . .

Off she goes, while I yawn
And shudder away from the gloom
And the chill of the room,
Till the roar in the grate reassures me.

My letters, my paper, my pleasure served up to the elbow;
My coffee to taste, and the fire burning gayer and
gayer. . . .

(Off she goes! I can hear her without, in the chill,
Bearing kindling and comfort, cheerful, untiring still.)
Should I venture the cold and the fog in the halls
I should grumble and suffer all day.
Yet she, in the earliest, wretchedest hours had the grit to
say:

"I must and I will! I am able to conquer this dread."

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

Patient as any planet on its round,
Over and over, up and down, he goes;
Because of him, we sleep secure and sound,
We need not know or care, because he knows.

The hollow rooms are eloquent with dark,
And empty chairs beside the failing fire
Watch for the dropping of the crimson spark
From ashes that are cooling past desire.

Across the padded hallways, where the light
Falls drowsily on carpets fast asleep,
The walls are leagued with silence and with night,
And all the windows have a pledge to keep.

The mirror lifts an eye to see him pass,
The lonely desks and tables, too, have heard;
And silent books, behind their sheltering glass
Observe him quietly, though none has stirred.

I hear him pausing just without the door
To turn the key within the recording lock;
The pools of dawn are pale upon the floor,
And faintly sounds the far chime of a clock.

We sleep secure, with all our cares forgot,
Because his faithful step is on the stair.
We dream, because the watchman slumbers not;
Because he cares, we need not know or care.

FREIGHTERS

(Frontenac—Thousand Islands)

Because they are of homely build
And carry homely freight,
The burden-bearing river boats
Till after dark must wait
For that sublime transfiguring
Which proves their high estate.
They are like human labourers,
Who toil within the town
And trudge along its thoroughfares
After the sun goes down.

All day the slim, white pleasure craft
Their streamers gay unfurl—
The broad St. Lawrence river,
From shore to shore aquiver
With paths of flying pearl.
They are like bright, celestial birds
Whose plumage bears the light—
Strangers to black, unlovely scows
That haunt the waves at night.

Then falls the goblet of the sun
That turns the waters wine;
Then creeps the slow, still witchery
That makes the dark divine.
And gliding through the liquid night
Like jewelled ships in space,
The tall, transfigured barges come
With burdens light as lace.

So starry and so still they are,
So stately do they pass,
I feel I am but dreaming,
Their beauty only seeming,
Like shadows in a glass.

And I am thinking, too, that God
Sees through the earth's disguise,
And looks upon His lowly ones
With rapt, adoring eyes.
And where the patient, drudging men
And burdened women go,
Like faithful barges of the sea
Slow-passing, to and fro—
Bearing the heavy, homely things
That help the needy race—
There goes a starry company,
Transfigured by His face;
And all the human labourers
Are messengers of light,
More lovely than the jewelled ships
That glide the waves at night.

(For Christina Howell Charles)

THE POWER TO EARN

Say not that money is an evil thing.
This deeply rooted thought some day may bring
Dearth and disaster to your cherished scheme
And keep you from the fruiting of your dream.

If you could see this dark and ancient thought
And know the misery such seed has brought;
If you could witness with revealing eyes
The sprouting of this worst of mortal lies
From tiny blade to cruel smothering vine;
How all its tentacles about you twine
With devastation in your own affairs;
How poverty, the curse of human kind
Is first a growth within the weakling mind
And then becomes a habit hard to break. . . .
Oh friend, a mighty vow your lips would make,
While in your breast the creative fire would burn:—

“I too, I too possess the power to earn!
My gift, my deeds, shall bring their full reward.
No matter if the struggle still is hard,
I dare believe that Money, large and free,
And rightly won, shall yet belong to me.”

Oh parents, teachers, tell the wholesome Truth
To eager minds and open hearts of youth:—
Not gold for sake of gold, not stupid gain
That profits basely at another's pain,
But strength to be the thing that Life demands,

The will to earn, with capable, swift hands,
With brain and soul that splendidly aspire
To win the destined goal of great desire.

*Scoff not at money, nor its blessings spurn,
But rather say: "I have the power to earn!"*

MAN CHALLENGES LIFE

I call to the deeps that mothered me
Ere ever my frame was set,
In the primitive dawn
When Life looked on
And time was a stranger yet;
I call to the deeps to deliver to me
My age-long tribute due—
I shall never cease nor give them peace
Till my lordliest dream comes true!

I summon my fate before it is late,
While yearning is sweet and strong,
To render to me superb and free
The joys that to me belong.
'Tis the meek who call for a measure small
From the Giver's royal hand,
And he alone shall receive his own
Who claims what the gods command.

SECTION VII
SIGNS AND WONDERS

SIGNS AND WONDERS

Quote me no paragraph or page
To prove the love of God;
I know Him through nasturtium fire,
Through leaf and lily pod.
I trace Him in the emerald wings
Upsoaring from the sod—
Show me no paragraph or page
To prove the love of God.

Point me no parchment dim with age
To prove that God is Law.
His pulse is in the Pleiades,
In every breath I draw;
His speed is in the atom,
His rhythm in the tides,
His chariot the universe
Where Law in beauty rides.

Show me no temple, shrine or tomb
Life's wonder to explain;
The frost has breathed a Holy word
Upon my window pane;
I light the fire, I bake the bread,
I hear the kettle's hymn,
And every cubic inch of air
Is mad with seraphim.

O healing Beauty in my soul,
O Comfort understood;
I need no book, no priest, no scroll
To tell me God is good!

LAW

A law by any other name may keep its wonder,
So why should human science seek to plunder
The living soul of worship and of awe?
For back of every law lies super-law,
And back of all phenomena there dwell
The letters that no document may spell.

A law by any other name may keep its glory!
And back of gravitation lies a wonder-story.
And far above the moon, where beauty rides,
A splendour tells the coming of the tides.
We call it "law," but could some other word
Explain the melody our ears have heard,
The ebbing and the rising of the sea,
Who knows but this phenomena might be
The rhythmic pulsing of the Creator's breast?
Were law less perfect, measured by this test?
Were law confounded or denied because
A deeper vision pierced beneath the laws?

And who shall say what miracle is done
When ocean vapours, winging to the sun,
Descend again like angels to our need,
And bread comes blossoming from common seed?
And is it "law," or love, or Heavenly Grace
That marks the orbits of the worlds in space,
And keeps our planet smoothly trimmed and burning?
And is it "law," or love, that thrills my brain?
I would not care, though questioning were vain.

For whether Law or Love or any other cause,
A Super Being stands behind our laws.
The world is but the shadow of His breath,
And He it is who liveth after death!

COMMON DUST

Early this morning as the sun did rise,
I saw a sight that thrilled me with surprise;
Midway between the window and the stair
A miracle that gathered in the air—
The day, a spotlight shedding molten fire
To show the way and bid the dust aspire;
The lowly dust, that but awhile before
Lay dim and casual along the floor
But now, in kinship with celestial things,
Was suddenly abroad on golden wings.

Magic has fairy ways to tame us all.
The dust grew bigger and my bed grew small . . .
That I might view these flaming cherubim
My senses narrowed to a beetle's rim;
Till specks of radium were shooting stars
And motes were acrobats on silver bars.
In orderly array before my eyes
A gorgeous world of beauty did arise,
And solar systems in their orbits went
Like blazing ships across the firmament,
While speeding comets, rioting through space
Were like a burning wind upon my face.

I wonder, when to-morrow's dawn shall shine
And earthly values once again are mine,
If I shall gaze upon that humble floor
And think of dust as I have thought before? . . .
Dance, little Crimson Coat and Madcap Green!
Help me to see again as I have seen

The swarming hosts that passionately spun
Their webs of wonder in the morning sun.
Oh splendour trampled 'neath the feet of men,
Never shall I misname you "dust" again!

JEWEL DUSK

Jewel dusk,
When all your lamps are lit,
I love to sit
Here by my own small window, where the light
Is softer than gray velvet sewn with gold.
It gathers, fold on fold,
Deeper and deeper in its gentle mesh,
So real, sometimes, I feel it on my flesh
As if a garment dropped upon my shoulders
And slid about my form,
Elusive, dark and warm—
A dear invisible dress.

A million arc lights make your loveliness:
Thousands of motor cars, with lamps aglow;
The river boats, reflected in the water
Where jewels overflow.
Night is a queen who sheds her treasures everywhere . . .
And though the day be fair
The darkness is more royal than the sun.
Jewel dusk, you crown your children, every one,
The humblest slave may own your dazzling rings. . . .
The poorest, in your light, become as kings!

SLEEP

I turn the knob of an unseen door,
And glide across the threshold into darkness
Knowing no more till daylight
Calls me from my pillow.

Once, ere I went,
I caught the flash of fountains;
Of alabaster archways
Glowing in the silence.
Into my mortal brain I brought the memory
Of marble stairways overhung with light. . . .
Just as I turned the door knob,
Just as I slid across the threshold
Thick with bright mysteries of another world.

"UP THERE"

"Up there!" the poet said, when they besought her:
"*Where* is the place and what the defining word?"
Could Science capture what the Muses taught her,
Or logic what the inner ear had heard?
"Then worthless all!" the scientist would chide her,
"And worthless are the dreams of prophets dead."
The standards of the Future would deride her
Unless her terms were absolute, he said.

Unless within the boundaries of Science
In words that Science carefully approved,
Her vision like a modern steel appliance
Could measure off the distance as it moved.
Unless in terms that Science had discovered
Her knowledge met the acid of the test,
Her fairest dream was but a cheat that covered
A tantalizing ferment in her breast.

She shook her head. "This knowledge knows no spaces,
Its freedom is the freedom of the air;
It rushes like the storm from hidden places,
It seizes and entrances me" . . . "But where?"
Again she gestured. "Place it where you please,
Or in the sky or in the earth below.
This certainty is wider than the breeze. . . .
I know, but cannot tell you how I know."

"Then worthless, all! A waste of breath and speech;
Your dreams betray, as falsehood must betray.
Bring rhyme and fancy to the common reach
Of logic uttered in the common way.

Reveal at once what cell within the brain,
What nerve within the body can enfold
The vision of the poet, and his pain,
Else better were the phantasy untold."

"You mean that I, in definite dimensions
Shall tell the trance that touched me with the dawn?
To satisfy the scientist's intentions
Shall analyze the joy I looked upon? . . .
But length and breadth and thickness will not spell it! . . .
All measurements its measurements elude,
And though I call a thousand winds to tell it,
No wind may compass the creative mood. . . .

"I ask of you what you of me would ask:
Whence is the melody the thrushes sing?
O you, who question me behind your mask,
You are above, beyond, your questioning.
Behind the probe of your mysterious eyes
The Being stands and gives its own replies."

IS IT GOD?

Is it God saying, "I"
When the mortal says, "I love, I hope, I try?"
Is it God standing by
Looking out through the human eye,
Beating hard in the human breast,
Eager to meet life's test?

Is it God saying, "I"
When danger and death are nigh
And the body fears to die?
Yet, a Something sounds its cry
Flashing above our fear
"Lo, I am here!"

What is this self that deeply feels and utters, "I"?
Body it never was and never can be. Let us try
Saying as if the body only uttered it.
Something above the body seems to flit,
Something above the body seems to sing,
Something that rims us round with halo warm and sweet,
Fluttering robe-like round the restless feet,
Soaring beyond us with triumphant wing.
O God, Creator, pulsing through the earth and sky,
May we who pray to Thee make this our cry
"Be Thou the Self within us, saying 'I'."

WHEN THE BLAZE LETS GO

QUESTION

When my free self lets out at last—
(Hard be the fetters in which I am cast)—
What shall I find, what shall I see
Is the shape and the manner and texture of me?
When the blaze lets go the yielding bands,
The bones and cartilage, feet and hands;
When my free self lets out and soars
Through Heaven's softly curtained doors,
What shall I find in that blue space
Now but a veil above my face?
Shall I claim the love that was denied—
Shall I be satisfied?

ANSWER

When thou shalt pass the sky's blue door,
Thou, who wert single, shall be more;
Thy shape and texture like to His
Who dwelleth in the eternities.
Thou who a separate being seemed
Shalt find the splendour thou hast dreamed
Close gathered in the Supreme Embrace
Of One whose beauty filleth space.
Thou like a torch shalt mix thy flame
In the vast Source from which it came;
The ray caught up into the sun,
Thy many selves complete in One.

SECTION VIII

MOTHERS AND SONS

MOTHERS WITH LITTLE SONS

O mothers with little sons
And burning hearts to teach,
You are the chosen ones—
Give hearing, I beseech!
The world is a ghastly place
Since war has slain our men;
But yours is the gift
And yours the grace
To bring love back again.

Mothers, I beg you, heed
What hate's dark hand has done;
How the hearts of the people bleed
Till peace and right are won.
How the maimed and halt and blind
And the dread ones hidden away
Are a challenge to all mankind
To fashion a better way.

Mothers with little sons,
As you hold them to your breast,
Teach them to hate the guns,
That love and faith are best.
Show how the tyrant War
Destroys but does not win;
How the goals men battle for
Are lost with the world's great sin.

Strip from the monster's frame
His glittering robe of lies;
Show him in all his shame
To your children's visioning eyes.
Show how the lust to kill
Is the jungle's law of might,
And shells dropped down on a helpless town
Are murder in God's sight.

O mothers with little sons
Who stand with lifted faces,
All of earth's helpless ones
Cry from the lonely places.
And the dead men plead their cause,
And the crippled men implore:
"Go, fashion the Future's laws
That war shall be no more."

For war is a knave's design,
And a coward's brutal scheme,
And men whose courage is divine
Shall foster a nobler dream.
O mothers with little sons,
The years lie in your hands.
You are the chosen ones,
Men wait for your commands.
Not till your lips declare:
"Our sons no more shall fight!"
Shall the crimson soil be fair
And the ravaged earth be right.

MOTHERHOOD TRIUMPHANT

I have made eyes for you, that you may see—
Dear stranger, nearing now the shores of earth.
I have prepared for you, and all that you may be,
Your small, mysterious tenement of birth;
Have fashioned 'neath my heart, in muffled pain,
Sweet hands and pliant limbs, and brow and brain.
I have made ears for you, that you may hear;
I have made lips for you, that you may laugh—
Oh, miracle of little lips that quaff
The chalice I shall yield to you, my dear!
Guest from the realms uncharted yet by man,
Strange voyager from seas we may not span,
Your body waits! The supple, eager frame
Commands the coming of the immortal flame.
I have been patient, that your hands may bear
Torches and triumphs in some future hour.
Brooding, I feel the splendour that you wear,
In proud foreknowledge swaying to your power
Even as tides obey the regnant moon.
O Babe of Paradise, come soon, come soon
To take the tabernacle, pure and white,
Which Love has made, to bring you to my sight!

(For Mrs. Learned and Bruce)

THE UNPAID DEBT

(Prompted by Lord Haig's Appeal for the Ex-Soldiers)

What shall we do for those sad men
Who bartered all that life could give,
And from the wars came home again,
Too bitter-poor to live?

Once we applauded what was brave,
Above the stricken soldier yearned;
Have we forgotten what he gave,
That we should walk with faces turned,
Engrossed with small polite affairs—
Can it be true that no one cares?

THE TREES THAT DIED IN THE WAR

(For G. H. G.)

So gentle they, yet glorious,
Living their lives unseen;
Treading the soil, victorious,
Brave gods with banners green.
They asked for naught but the pleasure
Of serving the sons of men,
Lavish with leafy treasure
When Spring should come again.

What answered we to their yearning?
What gave we for their cheer?
Hatred and shells and burning,
Death in the Spring of the year.

Gone like a vanished city.
Tragic and far as Greece.
God! Shall they give us pity?
Men! Shall they bring us peace?

SECTION IX

PEOPLE

IT WAS ALWAYS PEOPLE

After all, it was people
That made the day happy.
I thought it was sunlight, winds, grasses;
I thought it was the far look of beauty
On the maroon velvet hills.
I thought it was the hidden melody
Gushing from invisible springs,
The mystical, the indescribable,
The olden wonder at the heart of the world. . . .

But now I know it was always people
That made the day marvelous
And the night mysterious.
It was just the common, everyday people
That gave to the hour its glamour.
For, oh, I have been living
Shut away from people,
And all about me were sunlight, grasses, mountains;
All about me skies of enchanting glory;
At night a host of marching planets
In flaming armour over my head;
And winds and perfume and ebony silences. . . .
But, oh, I have been a stranger on a strange planet;
I have wandered alone, bitter, unresponsive;
Nor stars could kindle me nor winds entice my spirit.
So now I know it was always people
That gave to the earth its glamour,

Just people . . . calling my name.
Putting the welcome bread before me,
Touching hands in fellowship and love.
It was they who made the miracle of living;
Oh, it was just people, wonderful people, after all!

SCARS

(A Girl to Her Soldier Lover)

Here are the wounds that saved my lover's life.
The surgeon's knife
Gashed here, and here,
That he whom I hold dear
Should lift to me his eyes
Within this hour.
O sacred symbol of immortal power!
O miracle more dear than Heavenly grace,
More lovely than the look upon his face,
More precious than the pale and shining stars . . .
These scars!

"CROWN JEWELS"

I cannot keep from thinking how this crown
Would save the people of some stricken town;
And how this ruby's glow were more divine
If to the famished it were bread and wine.
These crusted fires upon a golden sword,
These hoarded gems of earl and knight and lord—
One handful of their blazonry would bring
A year of comfort to the suffering.

I cannot help but reason how this cup
Wherefrom the ancient kings were wont to sup,
This platter of superbly carven gold,
These flashing forks a princess used to hold;
These tankards and these goblets, furnace-bright,
This ecstasy of jewels rainbow-white;
This pomp and passion of supreme display,
Would make the hungry happy for a day.

THE GREAT ARE WITH US

I know a man great as Virgil,
Sweeping streets and cleaning snow;
A woman lovelier than Helen
Hides a deeper woe.

Who shall summon words to show them?
Who with truth their deeds portray
So the eyes of all may know them
Here, to-day?

LITTLE GARDENS UNDER MOONLIGHT

Little gardens under moonlight,
How well I know the silver of your spires;
You are the utterance of humble people,
The shape of their desires.

Your larkspur happiness, your daisied look
Are like the pages of an open book
Telling the dream that else had not been said;
The voice of aspiration, and the thrust
Of human faith, like azure from the dust—
Azure and white and gold and burning red.

You are the spoken word of those who pray
Softly, when none may listen, in the white
Dew-laden, moon-enchanted night.
You say in beauty what they may not say
During the dull and homely round of toil . . .
You are the people, risen from the soil.

HOME-LONGING

There's no home like the home I left;
In golden lands am I bereft;
By alien shores I strain my eyes
For that sweet, vanished Paradise.

I shall be thinking more and more
Of how the sky looked from my door,
How hollyhocks were frilled and tall
And neighbourly beside my wall. . . .
The wistful way my pansies had,
How lilacs made my pulses glad,
And how I answered with a thrill
The shout of Springtime on the hill.

No lands, no flowers and no trees
Like those I loved across the seas;
No faces like the faces kind
Of friends I knew and left behind.
My windows, looking to the sun;
My breakfast table, bright with fun,
My cups and saucers, plates and things,
My fussings and my putterings.

O lure me not with treasures old,
With tombs and temples manifold—
My heart's away across the brine,
Your land is yours and mine is mine.
There's not a place on all the earth
Like the dear land that gave me birth.
Wait, wind; and share my passage, moon!
Time's up. I shall be sailing soon.

MOVING DAY

(Seeing the spectacle of thin mattresses, broken furniture and ragged household belongings being carted from one poor tenement to another.)

As the bird builds her nest,
So has she builded her best—
Poor little tenement mother protecting her brood . . .
She has given the best she could.

Titter and turn if you must when the cart goes by—
Crippled chairs have a ludicrous look to the eye;
Broken cribs and bureaus battered in;
Pillows worn, and mattresses too thin;
Ragged quilts, insulting to the sight;
Nothing new or fresh, and nothing right . . .
And yet, from feeble wisps of straw and wood
She has builded the best she could!

Widowed and weak, matching her strength with the rest,
She has bravely woven her nest.
Fighting the forces of terror, injustice and greed,
With a house full of babies to feed,
Snatching these fragments of cotton and wool and straw,
Plucking her pitiful twigs from the forest of life,
She has followed the higher law;
Out of the jungle of misery, fear and hate,
She has builded a better fate.

As the bird weaves her nest,
Dear little tenement mother whose life is a song,

You are helping the world along!
Feeble, alone, matching your strength with the best,
Fighting the forces of poverty, fear and shame,
You are worthy a golden name.
Oh, if the safe and sheltered only understood . . .
You have builded the best you could!

CRIMSON NECKLACE

I asked not what had been the sorrow
That drained her face of its rose;
I only said I'd come to borrow
A prop for the garden hose.
"A hot day. Sizzling hot, isn't it, madam?"
Then our eyes met, and she was Eve, and I was Adam.

In faint blue gingham she was garmented,
With white about the elbows and the waist;
A sun hat drooped enticingly about her head,
(As from the orchard she had come in haste)
And round her throat, slipping into her frock
A blood red necklace gave me a queer shock.

Not pretty—no. That word would hardly suit her,
So rare the sorcery of her deep eyes;
I, who was but a simple country tutor
Stood spellbound in surprise.
Then light came flooding to that smooth, sad face,
And Eden's glamour fell upon the place.

How happened it? Before I sought her gate
Or mounted those white steps to find her door
I was a common man with a common fate,
A humble person, dull and proud and poor.
Then magically, by a hand unseen . . .
Masks off! And I was king and she was queen.

Strange how the patterns of the world leaped forth
From fern and leaf and long-familiar green.

Luxurious tapestries of princely worth,
Till now unguessed, an hour ago unseen.
Caught in Life's vestibule, outside the door,
I'd never entered Love's great rooms before!

I knew not why so oft alone was she—
(The gossips called her man a worthless cur)
I only strove a goodly friend to be,
Helped in the orchard, sought to comfort her,
Strange eyes and stranger necklace luring me,
Till eyes alone were all that I could see.

Then the avenger in the evening's cool—
(Not God the doer, but a thing called man)—
A human statue stiff in a crimson pool—
Go, look on murdered innocence who can!

Now all earth's rooms are but the vestibule
To some far beckoning day when I shall see
The living statue rise from that dark pool,
The golden eyes of her look back at me.
Earth, blood and brute—all, all shall fade away
And her eyes only hold the light of day.

WOODMAN'S LOVE

Fragrant and clean as smell of sweet pine shavings,
Richer than balsam, white as silver birch. . . .
You'd say perhaps, that she was fair as moonbeams,
Or like a star that gleams above your church.

But I'm a man, and lumber's my profession;
I think in terms of trees and bark and wood,
And all the wholesome names that fit the forest
I somehow like to give to womanhood.

Sweeter than sawdust, gold and freshly fallen;
Healthy and fine as new leaves on a tree;
Strong and reliant as the trunk and branches—
That's just the way my sweetheart seems to me.

Others would say, perhaps:
"She's like a lily; wild as a rose, and delicate as dew."
But I'm a man, and what I feel like saying
Would, just as likely, not appeal to you.

A sturdy pair of comrades in the woodland,
We love alike the sunshine or the moon;
We love the wind that brings us close together,
For then our leaves may touch, and softly croon.

I cannot think God wishes walls for lovers . . .
The sky, the woods, were fashioned for their bliss;
For love is tall and sacred as a forest,
And trees should bend above us, when we kiss!

THE TORN LETTER

What the full heart contained and rashly wrote,
Then in the calm of colder mood recalled,
With coward caution for an alien look,
Lies scattered here in fragments on the green;
Nor shall the loudest moan
E'er summon to its whole those shattered leaves.

Why should the mind so timidly forswear
The treasure which on earth so rarely comes,
In terror of a temporal disdain?
Look you, enraptured mortal caged with fear,
Those paper petals wasted on the ground
Had more enduring worth
Than thrones or marts of commerce shall declare.

Rash your confession, yet more criminal
The haste that tore a gospel of the heart
In shreds so small that never eye shall see!
He who is loved or loves, partakes of Heaven,
And surely Heaven's scroll is worth to keep!

SECTION X

WHIMS AND FANCIES

COSY AFTERNOON

The house has a cosy, late-in-the-afternoon feeling;
The shadowy rooms are deep with gold-brown lustre,
Nameless, intangible, good.

Echoes of croquet come from the green side terraces
Where leisurely players are pretending zest,
Knocking the balls about with flickering abandon,
Laughing the cheery laughter of comfort and assured
serenity.

From my window I see the deepening plush of tall tree
shadows

Like folded drapery upon the lawn.

And I know the sun, like a mammoth gold balloon,
Will be dropping, dropping earthward—soon.

A signal of that final glorious descent

Burnishes to sudden pink a patch of snowy coverlet,

Eats into the frail fabric of my window curtains

Like flame,

Brandishes a blade of crimson above my head.

My door stands open to all sounds below—

The ticking of the kitchen clock,

Tick tock, tick tock,

A steady needle puncturing with blithe stitches

The deep-meshed quiet of the afternoon.

This is the lull that comes before the approaching turmoil,

The stir and bustle of the homecoming housewife,

The clink and clatter of pans and dishes,
The fragrance of delicious viands
Browning merrily in the industrious oven . . .
Biscuits, coffee, and something savoury
With a warm russet odour.

Oh, morning is good and noon is a blessing.
And night is a time of witchery, to conjure by.
But most of all, within my homiest self,
I like the hushed velvet of late afternoon,
Tick tock, tick tock;
The echo of croquet players on the lawn;
And a child's voice somewhere calling shrilly
Across the sun-browned silence.
Oh, you are lovelier even than the moon—
Cosy afternoon!

POETRY IN THE DICTIONARY

"Ivory, silver, alabaster." . . .

There, on the page, they chanced to be,
Grouping of sounds by the great word master,
Cluster of gems that would solace me,
Seeking the words that would best convey
The oyster whiteness of early dawn—
Pearls I had hunted for all day
And suddenly here had come upon.

There, in the cold, plain category,
Strung in a row, serene, secure,
Shedding an inner, delicate glory,
Haunting me with their white allure. . . .

"Ivory, silver"—creamy fair
And frosty cold, and mellow too;
But oh, what phrases would I dare
To match with alabaster's hue?

"Ivory, silver, alabaster." . . .

Words I would conjure with, and keep;
Words that would charm away disaster,
Words that would heal me in my sleep.
Oh, I shall feel them, love them, sing them,
Warm my soul by their luminous white;
Over and over again shall string them,
Pearls to lie on my heart all night!

GOD IS NOT TOO BUSY

If anyone says to me:

"Life is too serious and important for beautifying,"

I feel like delicately replying:

"God is not too busy, nor yet too solemn for it,

So why should we cease trying?

God seems to have time enough to put polka dots on the
tiger lily,

To scallop the white silk for daisy petals;

And He seems tremendously interested

In the precise gradations of colour in a rainbow."

GENIUS

(Being the tale of what a small bird accomplished with no visible implements of art)

The little gray bird took a tuck in his song,
Then ran a swift seam of delight.
His silk was of sunshine, his stitches were strong,
His needles as jewels were bright.
He fluted and puckered and ruffled and hemmed;
With dew and with rapture the pattern was gemmed,
And I heard where I stood, how a streamer unwound—
A dear, unbelievable ribbon of blue—
How it went through the woods with a miracle sound
In spirals of colour, ecstatic and true.

O bird, I've a token to carry with me,
Tucked softly away like a treasured rosette.
On my heart I shall wear it, where fairies may see—
Your song, darling bird, I shall never forget!

ENGLISH CLOVER

She looked so trim and sturdy when I found her—
A healthy bit of clover blossom, she!
The frilled and fluted ladies all around her—
(Chrysanthemums and asters in their beauty)—
Were calling her to come and mind her duty,
For they were up and hungry for their tea.

They summoned her across the prim green border:
"Be sure to bring us toast and marmalade!
And after that, we'll have another order
Of dew in amber glasses, freshly made.
A little honey, too—we like the flavour,
With cloudy cream whipped lightly to a froth—
Now mind you lay the very cleanest cloth
And make the tea with just the proper savour,
And have the doilies spick and span and tidy;
The tray must be as spotless as the noon!" . . .
And Becky bows and answers, "Yes, me Lidy!"
And darts away, returning very soon
So rosy with exertion, yet so quiet,
As maids of course must be to hold their place,
With snowy apron—pray, when did she tie it?—
And not a bit of hurry in her face.

Oh, she's a sturdy bit of English clover,
A simple maid, 'most hidden out of sight,
But I would rather have her, ten times over,
Than all the ladies, towering and bright.

She heartens me to look upon; and truly,
I've half a mind to call to her myself
Some morning when I feel a bit unruly:
"Say, Becky, got some cookies on the shelf?"

SPRING TREES IN TOWN

They are fuzzy with new leaves
As a baby's head with down,
But soon they will be flaunting
Gay tresses o'er the town.
Flapper trees will bob their hair
Higher than the chin;
Older, comely trees will wear
Hoods to travel in.
Mother trees in capes will go
To market in the square. . . .
Up, my friends! Be not too slow
If you would find them there.

THE FIRST HOT DAY

Like an intoxicated throng
Of many-colored beetles, moths and bees,
The Fifth Avenue crowd bumbled and buzzed along,
Pelted by sunshine honey-hot and gold. . . .
A day of summer in the season's cold.

Who does not know it—falling swiftly down,
After a month of coolness in the town?
A heat so sudden and so dusty red,
One yearns for saving frost or snow instead,
Yet welcomes with a lifting of the soul
The splendour that shall make him glad and whole.

I, from the bus top, watched the droves that beat
Impassioned wings within the amber street—
A tumbling, dizzy, vehement array
Of human creatures drunken with the day,
And fancied them, beholding from my height,
Huge dragon flies above a pool of light.

Then the illusion vanished, for I heard
An uttered plaint behind, and looked to see
A woman warmly cloaked and thickly furred,
As all my heated neighbours seemed to be.
“Oh dear! I've worn my Winter things! It's just the
way.
I always do it on the first hot day.”

TO AND FRO

(The Ant On the Blade of Grass)

He has nowhere to go
But to and fro,
To and fro.
His tiny girth
From grass to earth,
From earth to grass.
Above him pass
Strange human things
And feathered wings.
For all he knows
A godling goes
So near his rim
He touches him!

Yet could he speak
With puny squeak—
As mortals many times have done—
He'd have no knowledge of the sun;
He'd have no vision of the day.
If you should ask him, he would say
(What mortals many times have said)
"There's nothing else when we are dead.
There's nothing more than what I see—
The twigs and grasses over me.
The sand from which I make my home,
The rock, the dew, the seething loam.
My eyes must see what they believe;
These solid things do not deceive!"

And then I plucked him from the twig:
"O little ant, the world is big!"
I put him down—he did not know.
He still is walking to and fro. . . .
To and fro, to and fro,
Around our little earth we go.
If trumps should hail us, would we hear?
Would we look up if gods were near?

LARKS AND LAMBS

Larks and lambs and sunset red
And a moon-white mist in the valley spread;
Lavender hills and opal skies
And a look of love in my lady's eyes.

Larks and lambs and the setting sun,
And love, and love that has just begun!

DAY-TIME MOON

O day-time moon,
Like a moth in June
You are held by a shining flame,
For the sun's great light
Has wooed your flight
And lured you whence you came.
As the moth that clings
With creamy wings
You drift in the daylight's gold.
With the coming noon
Your light shall swoon
And your feeble span be told.

But I shall wait
At the eastern gate
Till I find you once again,
When you wing your flight
Through the velvet night . . .
For you'll be silver then.
Would you rather go
Like a drift of snow
Through the blind uncaring noon,
Or greatly give
To all who live
Your wealth, O Lady moon?

LATE CORN FIELDS

(From a Train Window)

Rows and rows of green-gold maidens,
Flounces flying to the breeze,
Ragged tresses,
Flimsy dresses
Drawn across your shivering knees.
Who is speaking courage to you
When you toss your yellow hair,
Though the cruel wind goes through you,
Seeming not to care?
Rows and rows of withered maidens
Nimbly dancing in distress,
Torn to tatters,
Nothing matters,
Nothing spoils your happiness.
How I wish that I might know
What has thrilled you so!

How can Autumn's nipping breath,
How can Winter's near disaster
Send you whirling fast and faster
On the brink of death?
Can it be, O laughing ladies,
Gauzy maidens on the wing,
That which seems like death to me—
Tatters streaming,
Tempest screaming—
That which seems a tragedy
Is another sort of thing?

Do you, when your bodies die
Swift to other regions fly?
Do you have your Heaven, too,
Just as human beings do?

CHRISTMAS ORANGE

How did they fashion you?
What skill contrived
The yellow of your jacket, soft as kid?
Who crammed you with such ecstasy of sweetness
And lined you with such luxury of white—
With all the stitches hid?

Your tang, your essence,
Linger in the air long after.
Your pungent fragrance follows me and clings
Until I dream a dream of Christmas laughter. . . .
Myself a child among my Christmas toys
With other children round a Christmas tree.

(Over the roofs tops he had come at night,
Over the chimneys, while we slumbered fast;
The world with powdered snow was muffled white,
And yet his reindeer found our home at last!)
How lovely is an orange, sweet and yellow,
Crammed in a stocking ripe with Christmas joy—
Candies and nuts and apples red and mellow—
And every kind of toy.

God must have nursed a luscious thought within His mind
When He made oranges for humankind!

WINTER SUNSET

The world like a giant Christmas card
Is ebony, gold and pink;
And a bewildering edge of white
Spangles the twilight's brink.

Crystals are on the tops of trees,
And crystals on the roofs;
I hear the faint and fairy sound
Of tinkling reindeer hoofs.

Holly adorns my window frame,
And chimes I know so well
Over the painting gaily swing
To the shape of a gilded bell.

The world like a giant Christmas card
Is flaked with diamond dust;
I wonder if the job seems hard?
Sometimes I'm sure it must.

And yet the Artist's hand is hid,
His brush no eye perceives;
We only know He must be here
By what His skill achieves.

The earth like a giant Christmas card
Burns red and gold and cream. . . .
Night comes and tucks it all away
In the envelope of dream.

SECTION XI

TRIBUTES

NOBLE FELLOWSHIP

(A Tribute to the Work of the Art Alliance of America)

Art said: "My ways are fair and far,
Sweet with mist and mountain pine.
The cloud, the wind, the flying star
Beckon where my treasures are,
Lead me to a goal divine.
Upward, upward, let me go
Till my paths are hushed with snow,
Where the distant valley's din
Is but music, silver-thin,
And the clangour of the town
Delicate as eiderdown. . . .
Here shall inspiration speak
From the primal mountain peak!"

In the valleys, grim with smoke,
Industry her muscles plied,
Bending 'neath her heavy yoke
Thus to Art her passion spoke:
"You who tread the mountainside,
Neighbour of the windy tree,
Darling of all ecstasy,
Shed some beauty on my soul!
Dusty are the days that roll,
Iron wheels of circumstance,
Juggernauts that crush my heart—
Touch me with your healing, Art!"

Hail the day when Art came down,
Humbly where her sister stood,
Joined the clamour of the town,
Shared with industry her crown,
Braved the din and called it good!
Industry with kindled face
Thrilled to the divine embrace. . . .
Thus it is on every hand
Beauty walks within the land.
Art transfigures labour's yoke,
Paints her wings on factory smoke;
Glorifies the common floor
And brings Aladdin to our door!

ROOSEVELT

"He regarded not the harm he might do his political future . . . His business was to uphold the Right."

You cared not for your future; only cared
That you should speak the stinging word for Right,
Should thrust wrong through as with a dagger bright—
For this your life, your strength, your all, you dared.
Your soldier spirit to the storm you bared,
And as the shell fire from the enemy's ranks
Grew fiercer yet, your noble heart gave thanks
Because the vision and the goal were spared.
O Roosevelt! Dreamer, Doer, Man and Knight,
Because you cared not, all the world shall care.
All sisters, mothers, wives, forever wear
Your name upon their souls in letters white,
And thronging all the highways of the earth
Pay homage to the home that gave you birth.

HIDDEN TREASURE

(A Tribute to the Work of Martha Berry)

The children of the far, neglected hills,
Shut off from earth's vast treasure house of learning,
Dark with the bitterness of isolation
And empty with the loneliness that kills—
The friendless poor, forgotten of the nation—
These with the passion of a mother's yearning
She gathered in one glorious intent,
That all should know and love enlightenment.

They tell us of a star the wise men sought,
To show the path that led unto the manger;
And who shall say her torch had less of glory
Whose burning will and shining courage caught
The utmost splendour of that ancient story,
Revealing Truth where Truth had been a stranger?
How great the miracle, when light is born
In minds untutored and in hearts forlorn!

Out of the shale of ignorance and want,
Out of the dross that covered God's creation,
Because of her who laboured without resting,
Whose faith no ill could slay, no terror daunt,
No hardship hinder from her noble questing,
Behold what triumph of transfiguration
In glowing minds perfected by her toil
As jewels bravely summoned from the soil.

America no worthier crown may wear
Than these forgotten gems, her hidden treasure,

Bright as the gold that gleamed that holy morning
 When frankincense and worship filled the air.
 All praise to her who laboured, nothing scorning,
 For that enduring good which none may measure,
 With knowledge for her star and love her creed,
 Who, hand in hand with God, has wrought this deed.

WHEN PEOPLE SING

(Inscribed to The People's Chorus of New York,
L. Camilieri, Conductor)

You never know the people
Or what the people bring;
You never know the nation
Till you hear the people sing.
We said: "Their ways are arrogant,
Each goes a selfish path."
We said: "Their hatreds deepen
To wars and cruel wrath."
But even as we said it
Their singing had begun,
And then we found that every man
Is God's own son.

We heard the clash of argument,
We heard the elders pray,
But we never knew the nations
Or what the people say.
They bled upon the battlefields,
They struggled in the mart,
For no man knew his neighbour,
And few could find his heart.
But even while we said it,
Their singing had begun;
And then we found the center
Where humanity is one.

Oh men who fight for kingdoms,
Who labours for renown,

You've a kingdom, could you know it,
 In the village, in the town,
 Where the golden stores of melody
 That yearn to be expressed
 Are locked within your neighbour,
 His Heaven, unconfessed.
 And who would seek for Paradise
 Or angels on the wing?
 Come! Let us know the people's heart
 And help the people sing!

THE HIGHER GENIUS

(A Tribute to the Work of Mrs. John Henry Hammond)

The strength that lesser people spend
In toiling for a selfish end—
(The zeal for individual fame)—
She pours into that higher aim
Of helping other souls to reach
The spires of art, the hills of speech.
Her spirit finds its true advance
When other hearts have utterance.

Think of the goals you love the best,
The themes that beckon and inspire;
Speak of the loves that stand the test
Of earth's flood and Heaven's fire;
The church, the school, the poor man's plight,
The widowed and the fatherless,
That glowing justice, leagued with right,
Which answers to the world's distress;
Mention the Cause that stirs your heart—
The country's good, the civic need,
The broad commands of noble Art,
The prophet's hope, the patriot's deed;
Follow the needs of humankind,
The myriad ways of doing good,
And all are shining roads that find
Their center in her womanhood.

A thousand paths, that have their end
And their beginning in her soul;

She who is mother, wife and friend,
 But first an Artist, sound and wise—
 Such art as gathers up the clay
 Of this our godhood in disguise,
 And out of every common day
 Summons the spirit, and reveals
 That splendid vision of the mind,
 That greatest of the great ideals—
 The noble sculpture of mankind!

"INEFFECTUAL ANGEL"

(To Shelley)

How shall we call him ineffectual whose wings
Beating the void, have showered us with fire?
His coming vain, when all our cavern rings
With trancèd music of a celestial choir?
O Spirit fair—for man thou never wert!—
Vain must our planet seem to thee, instead,
That thou didst bring us thine immortal hurt
And we should let thee die, uncomforted!

WIZARDRY

(To Albert Spalding)

The lark that sang at Heaven's gate
 Had not so burning gold a voice
 Nor yet so azure fine
 As his whose bow like some illumined thing
 Akin to lightning in the stormy air
 Ribbioned the darkness with an edge of fire,
 And blazing fiercer yet
 Challenged the inky hollows of the soul
 With such immortal flame
 That memories long hid as in a tomb
 And hopes deprived and dreams beyond our call
 Leaped in the light and beckoned us again. . . .

And we were swept as on a noble wind
 Through shaking forests where the chiming trees
 Echoed his sorcery with wild acclaim,
 Yearning to follow where the lightning led
 As followed we the lifted bow's allure
 Across the chasm of forgetfulness
 Down the deep gorges of departed bliss
 Where waterfalls make music in the night;
 Mounting the slopes of happiness again
 To find a precious ruby called the day. . . .
 Standing at last upon a twilight hill
 With dew upon our cheeks and worship in our hearts,
 Facing the quiet of the evening star.
 Stratford-on-Avon.

THE DIVINE FORETELLING

(To The Three Arts Club)

ARTISTS

Before your forms were made, or any part of you,
The Unseen Wonderful, The Infinite and High
Who spreads with starry gold the blue shores of the sky,
Fashioned the Dream that life would hold you to;
Lighted the lamp of yearning in your breast,
Painted the gleaming patterns in your brain
And thrilled your fingers with the artist's pain—
The creative ecstasy that knows no rest.

MUSICIANS

The Incorporeal Splendour that is back of everything,
The blaze of joy that leaps from a bird's note,
Uses the delicate channel of the human throat,
Crying imperiously to one daughter, "Sing!"
Urging a second to a different choice—
Another way to let the splendour through.
"I am the hidden Cause of all that you would do;
I am the Under-Song of violin or voice."

INTERPRETERS OF THE DRAMA

You with the impassioned purpose that would give again
In rhythmic gesture or enchanted word
The deep imperative beauty that has stirred
Through every age, the sensitive hearts of men. . . .

Do you know that this, which seemeth your own desire
Throbbled in the breast of God ere you were born;
Pulsed in the pearly flesh of the infant morn,
And you are one, this hour, with that immaculate fire.

TO ALL OF YOU

The Invisible Hand that spins the earth in space,
The Majestic Word that rounded star and sun,
Rounded your aspirations, every one.
As swings the world, so you to your high place!

AT THE PIANO

(To A Young Musician, Playing)

To C. T. L.

Last night, the while I listened to your playing,
It seemed to me I heard the masters saying:
"You are a channel such as we desire.
Your eloquence, your courage and your fire;
The strength you hurl upon the answering keys;
Your love for us, more wonderful than these;
The mettlesome, bright vigour of your mind—
These the interpreters we yearn to find.
Through such as you, though dead, we live again,
Our souls renewed within the souls of men."

A trumpet word for you I heard them saying,
(Brahms, Chopin, Beethoven, while you were playing).
As sunlight through rejoicing crystal pours,
Their shimmering vitality was yours.
Yours to convey in singing tones that shook
The hours to splendour, while the shadows took
A sparkling edge, and round about the door
A lightning flashed that had not shone before. . . .
Tables and shelves and pictures in their frames
And curtains ringed about with elfin flames—
Till suddenly I knew nor cold nor gloom,
For all was fluid gold within that room.
(I saw, I saw a compelling figure stand
And spur you with his vehement command).

The ceiling sang with it while you were playing,
 For Oh, I heard, I heard the masters praying:
 "You are a channel such as we would seek.
 Yield us your life, that we again may speak!"

THE GIRL SCOUTS

You who make a friend of the earth's clear waters,
You who find a neighbour in the strong, bright breeze;
You who are the mothers of the future's daughters,
Nobly fair as the forest trees . . .
Healing sun and calling star
Shall salute you from afar.

You who are the prophets of a clarion creed,
Law and Beauty understood;
You who answer bravely to your country's need,
Bound in loyal sisterhood . . .
Wholesome joy and tingling health,
These shall prove the nation's wealth.

Who shall now be crying of the world's dark sorrow?
Wars that keep forever the appointed pace,
You who are the heralds of the great to-morrow,
You shall end the grieving of the sundered race,
Feuds that kill and hates that blind. . . .
Love and youth shall save mankind.

You who are the bringers of a new world order,
You who find your sisters in a far off land,
You who make the ends of the earth your border,
Clasp your foe's relenting hand
Above the sea's absolving blue. . . .
Peace shall come because of you!

CHRIST AT CANEY CREEK

I know a woman,
A brave, splendid woman,
Frail, single-handed,
Because love commanded
She shouldered a burden the thousands should take;
The poor, the neglected,
She nobly respected,
She gave them her life
For humanity's sake.

She, like a ladder,
That they should be gladder,
Stood in the depths of their pitiful night,
Using her strength for their climbing, at length
Upward they rose to the wonderful light.
Minds that had yearned for enlightenment, burned
With the beauty of knowledge, the joy of the quest.
Wisdom awoke for the poor mountain folk,
The lowliest shanty could welcome the Guest.

O women whose purses
Are glittering curses;
O men who have wealth that shall never be told;
I beg you to come
Where the meek and the dumb
Are crying for knowledge and needing your gold.
O, I know a woman, a dear Christly woman—
So frail you could blow her away with a breath.

But she like a ladder, that they shall be gladder,
Is helping a people climb upward from death!

Inscribed to Alice Spencer Geddes Lloyd
Caney Creek, Knott County, Pippapass, Kentucky.

GOLDEN-HEARTED WOMAN

(To Mrs. Walter G. Ladd)

Dear friend, who from thy faith didst nourish me,
 And tend my dreams, and help my hopes to bear 1
 Bright buds and leaves and singing blossoms fair
 Till Time should bring its fruitage to my tree;
 Thou brave, thou noble and unwearied one
 Who from thy pain hast summoned only good,
 And from the magic of thy womanhood
 Hast wrought in joy what anguish had begun.

I see thee as a spirit strong and bright,
 A golden woman, helper of the race,
 For all are blest who look upon thy face,
 And all are healed who stand within its light,
 And they who touch the sweetness of thy soul
 And they who know the beauty of thy mind
 Are nevermore disheartened or unkind—
 The splendour of thy life hath made them whole.

What is thy secret, friend? What whisper fine
 Hath drifted to thee from another sphere?
 What silver word hath tuned thine inner ear
 To lift our hearts and make our dreams to shine?
 O friend, if sorrow linger in thy heart
 For human woe and want beyond our reach,
 For wrongs that fester for the need of speech,
 Be comforted that thou hast done thy part.

KREISLER AT ALBERT HALL

The shouting and applauding made you seem
A thing unreal, the movement of a dream;
The song I yearned for, yet afar, untrue,
So vast the tumult that enshrouded you.
But afterwards, oh afterwards, more clear
Than music palpitant upon the ear,
You sang through summer like a bird afloat,
You wrapped me round as in a silver coat,
Made radiance upon the hills for me
And caused a fiery beauty on the sea;
Gave back to me my vision of the goal
And made me once again a living soul.

